

NORTH DAKOTA HOMELAND SECURITY

Summary of Activities

September 11, 2001 - September 11, 2002

State, local, tribal, business and private organizations and individuals have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to ensuring a safer North Dakota since the tragic events of September 11th, 2001. Within communities, residents have adopted heightened security measures in the wake of the terrorist attacks on our nation. A private, public and individual partnership to "Watch the Neighborhood" has evolved, emphasizing the necessity to "lock the doors" and report any suspicious activities in neighborhoods; schools; workplaces; high profile, heavily-attended events; and key facilities.

North Dakota's response to the events of September 11 was immediate as we took precautions to safeguard against terrorist threats. State and local Emergency Operations Center's (EOCs) and Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) were activated, and security forces were placed on heightened alert. Private, state, tribal and local organizations worked in concert to ensure the safety of our citizens. On the morning of the 11th, the North Dakota Air National Guard was called into immediate service to fly protective missions over the Nation's Capitol and transport the New York State Emergency Management Director from a conference in Montana back to New York.

Major issues of concern and areas of planning priority that are currently being addressed in the state, by government and the private sector include: bio-terrorism and animal-borne disease concerns; border security; continuity of government; airport and aircraft security; safeguarding key public and private facilities and critical infrastructure; sustainment and interoperability of resources; enhancement of mutual aid agreements among communities; improvements to warning and alert systems; and receipt and dissemination of Homeland security intelligence.

On October 4, 2001, Governor John Hoeven named Doug Friez, State Director of the North Dakota Division of Emergency Management (DEM), as the state's Homeland Security Coordinator. Based on this designation, the statewide Emergency Management infrastructure was adapted to enhance Homeland Security through awareness and coordinated preparedness, prevention and response.

Within this existing Emergency Management infrastructure, the state maintains a 10-annex, multi-hazard plan that incorporates the technical expertise and resources of 50 state agencies. The plan outlines how the state will provide support to four tribal nations and 53 counties during emergencies and disasters. The EOP has provided the parameters for North Dakota's response to the

repercussions of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and subsequent events and issues.

In keeping with DEM's practice to periodically review the plan, the State EOP has been expanded to include: revisions to the portions of the plan addressing terrorism/weapons of mass destruction; development of a Homeland Security measures checklist and information campaign guidelines; and incorporation of the N.D. Attorney General's suspected terrorism information form and the N.D. Department of Health's guidelines for handling suspicious mail, parcels or substances.

Local EOPs mirror the State EOP and were similarly evaluated. Efforts are underway to enhance those plans through dialogue of key responders and special training initiatives..

In addition to these planning efforts, North Dakota, on state, local and tribal levels, has evaluated and adjusted training and operational initiatives; incorporated aviation security measures; heightened security of key facilities; increased intelligence gathering and sharing among law enforcement, military and public agencies; enhanced direct communications with federal counterparts; and launched public information campaigns designed to empower individuals and organizations at the local level.

Governmental agencies provided information about safe mail handling protocols, workplace security and maintaining normalcy with enhanced vigilance. DEM developed a direct Homeland Security link to its home page. The link provided guidance and pertinent information to citizens seeking direction on homeland security efforts. The link also provides an ongoing statewide calendar of anti-terrorism exercise and training events.

Governor Hoeven formulated a specialized continuity of government program committee tasked with developing a comprehensive continuance plan for state agencies and essential government functions. Each state agency is developing its own plan regarding organizational staffing, alternate facilities and protection of records and data to ensure it can continue to provide services to its constituents.

Leaders of the state's extensive energy industry increased security at facilities, as did operators of water systems, laboratories, medical facilities, food processing plants, fertilizer plants and other industries. The state's commercial and private airport operators and aerial applicators adopted security plans and increased surveillance.

National Guard soldiers were placed at the state's commercial airports until May of this year. The Governor enacted increased security measures at the State Capitol and other state facilities, and urged local law enforcement officials and private sector owners to increase surveillance of key facilities.

Governor Hoeven also directed state agencies with aviation resources to assist the U.S. Border Patrol with aerial surveillance of the 270-nautical-mile United States-Canadian border. These agencies include N.D. Game and Fish, the Civil Air Patrol, the National Guard and the Highway Patrol. Additionally, National Guard personnel were ordered to federal status to assist the U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. Customs Service and Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) with border security missions.

In conjunction with the U.S. Department of Justice, the N.D. Division of Emergency Management developed a three-year Domestic Preparedness Strategy for the state. The strategy provides a comprehensive blueprint for the coordination and enhancement of efforts to counter terrorism incidents as well as for the utilization of related Federal, State, local, tribal, and private resources within the State. In fulfillment of this strategy, four regional response teams are being formulated for coordinated response to a terrorist incident or threat. DEM has obligated over \$3 million from the U. S. Department of Justice in specialized response equipment funds to first responders in Fargo, Bismarck, Minot, Grand Forks and the National Guard CST. As additional resources become available this concept will be expanded within other communities in the four sections of the state represented by the initial base communities.

The North Dakota Health Department submitted and received approval for a \$6.9 million U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grant. The grant provides funds to aid state and local health departments prepare for and respond to bio-terrorism, outbreaks of infectious disease and other public health threats and emergencies. Included is emphasis on planning for prevention and response to animal-borne diseases.

State, local, tribal, and private agencies have refocused training programs to address terrorism. The Governor hosted a statewide Homeland Security conference, coordinated by the Division of Emergency Management, the North Dakota League of Cities and the North Dakota Association of Counties. Topics included threat assessment, roles and responsibilities within the local and state EOPs, resources, working with the media and communicating with citizens. Additionally, state and local officials will embark on an aggressive CERT (Civilian Emergency Response Team) initiative to enhance community based emergency operations response units throughout North Dakota.

Additional activities continue to emphasize awareness and response to potential terrorist acts. Training activities include train-the-trainer courses for emergency medical service (EMS) providers and hazardous material response teams. Other courses are addressing: chemical and biological terrorism awareness and response; nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) incident command; weapons of mass destruction (WMD) awareness training; WMD incident planning for special facilities; and mass fatalities training. The Division of Emergency Management has recently retained a full-time exercise specialist to work with state agencies,

local and tribal jurisdictions and private entities in testing their capability to respond to a Homeland Security event.

Officials are also reviewing legislative issues to include: open records; public health concerns related to quarantine; first responder and care provider pre-immunization; and pharmaceutical stockpile.

North Dakotans continue to maintain heightened security activities by “Watching the Neighborhood.” Our state and local leaders face the challenge of maintaining a vigilant attitude to ensure security for our citizens, while maintaining our traditional level of freedom. It is imperative that each individual, as well as private sector and governmental leaders, prepare for a Homeland Security threat or attack. We will maintain and expand our private-public-individual partnerships to prepare our citizens, train our responders and enhance response capabilities.